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Home Blossoms



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HOME

LESSONS

VIOLET VALE.

Elmer
Reed

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Emily Read
from E. J. P.
June 24th 1883



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HOME

BLOSSOMS

BY

VIOLET VALE.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

FIFTH THOUSAND.

LONDON :

J. C. DUNMILL, MACHINE PRINTER,
119, JUNCTION ROAD,
HOLLOWAY, N.



PR
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V235h

TO MY READERS.

Dear Friends,

My mind has ever had an intense sympathy with home life in all its phases, lively and pathetic, from the cradle, to the coffin.

My duties in life have been many, with small opportunities to cultivate sentiment. Yet I was tempted to write some verses, which were published with a success that surprised me, and, yielding to the persistent and unrearied solicitations of those dangerous "enemies," my friends, I have put into rhyme some incidents that have been connected with my own quiet life, and others communicated to me by those I have known and loved. These pieces, written in the bosom of my own circle, away from the world, I now send forth, hoping some sunbeams of kindly faces and sympathetic souls may smile on my tiny bouquet of "Home Blossoms."

VIOLET VALE.

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LOSS OF THE PRINCESS ALICE,

In the Thames, off Woolwich, September 3rd, 1878.

They started that morning so happy and gay,
With hearts that were light as a feather,
Away from the city to spend a long day,
Enjoying the fine Autumn weather.

How little they thought, on that beautiful morn,
As gaily they steamed down the river,
How few of their number would ever return
To the homes they were leaving for ever.

How swiftly the day passed 'mid scenes of delight,
And health-giving breeze from the ocean ;
As evening advanced with its quiet twilight,
They assembled with pleasant commotion :

On board of the vessel again to return,
To the homes they had left in the morning,
And renew with fresh vigour the toils of the week,
As soon as next day should be dawning.

They travelled in safety for many a mile,
So calm lay the waters around them,
While over head brightly the harvest moon shone,
In glory on all things around them.

And many on board that fair vessel that night,
Sweet songs in the moonlight were singing,
While o'er the water there came a sweet sound
Of evening bells that were ringing.

But all in a moment the stillness of death
 Reign'd on board of that ship so ill-fated,
 As they saw coming near them so swift on the
 stream
 A vessel with speed unabated.

Then loudly they shrieked as their fate they
 beheld

For the vessel was right down upon them ;
 Their starboard she strikes, and, divided in two,
 She sinks, and the waters close on them.

Oh ! who can describe the wild panic that reigned
 On that ship as she sank in the river ;
 Or the battle they had with the waters so deep,
 The thought of it makes one's heart quiver.

For more than seven hundred were lost on that
 night,

And soon the sad news reached the city ;
 All London was stirred with emotion so great :
 With sympathy, sorrow, and pity.

And many a mother mourned over her child,
 And sisters a kind, loving brother ;
 But saddest of all were the orphans that night,
 Who were left without father or mother.

Oh ! sad was the sight the pale moon looked upon,
 On that beautiful night in September,
 And the dear ones so suddenly snatched from our
 side,
 We shall ever with sorrow remember.

Accepted and acknowledged by Her Majesty, Jan. 3rd, 1879.

ON THE DEATH OF
H. R. H. PRINCESS ALICE,
DECEMBER 14th, 1878.

Dear Princess, and has she left us,
For her Father's home above ;
From an earthly palace taken,
To the kingdom of His love :

There to reign with Him in glory,
With her children by her side :
Who to Heaven had gone before her,
And were safe, for Jesus died.

Many years ago did England
Sound her praises far and near ;
For her filial devotion
To her noble Father, dear.

Bright has been her life, and useful,
Home the centre of her love,
With a mother's true affection,
Like an angel from above ;

Watching o'er her stricken children
With a tender loving hand,
Ministering to the comfort
Of her helpless little band.

When forbidden to caress them,
Lest the kiss should fatal prove,

How it wrung her heart with sorrow,
To deny this pledge of love.

Yet, right bravely did she bear it,
Till death claimed her fairest flower,
Then with heart bowed down with sorrow,
In that dark and trying hour,

Did she break the mournful tidings
To her broken-hearted boy,
Who wept for the little sister,
Who had been his brightest joy.

Then her love for him o'ercame her,
And with out-stretched arms of love,
She did fold him to her bosom,
Asking help from One above.

But that kiss so fondly given,
Struck the death blow to her life,
And laid low the loving mother,
And the true devoted wife.

England mourns thee, gentle Princess,
And we offer up a prayer,
That our gracious Sovereign Lady,
May have strength this trial to bear.

May our Prince, her noble brother,
Who in sickness she did tend,
Find pure, holy consolation,
In that tender Heavenly Friend :

Who has promised to the mourner,
Brighter joy than earth can give ;
And if faithful they shall meet her,
Evermore in Heaven to live.

A PLEA FOR THE MINER.

Oh think of the miner, who works for his bread,
While dangers so awful hang over his head ;
A spark from a lantern may cost him his life,
And leave orphans his children, a widow his wife.

But a few months ago in a pleasant Welsh vale,
An explosion occurred, which shook mountain
and dale,
And buried the miners so deep under-ground,
That their poor mangled bodies have not yet been
found.

Oh dreadful to think of, near three hundred men
Buried deep in the earth, in that dark smoky den ;
Their end was so sudden, no message of love
Or farewell could they send to their loved ones
above.

And now in that same Rhonda Valley we hear,
Another explosion has filled them with fear ;
At midnight so suddenly roused from their sleep,
For husbands, and fathers, and brothers to weep.

The men had gone down to their work on that
night,
Not thinking with death they would soon have to
fight ;
Poor fellows they thought not of danger so near,
Till a terrible noise made their hearts quake with
fear.

They made for the shaft, 'twas too late, the foul
air

Drove them back in a frenzy of utter despair,
And soon overcome by the poisonous gas,
They lay dead in the pit, which they call the
Dimas.

But, Oh, who can picture the wild scene that
night,

As they rush from each cottage half dead with
the fright;

Each one is so anxious some tidings to gain,
Of the friends whom they fear they shall ne'er
see again.

The night wind blows fierce, yet they heed not
the cold,

They stay not around them warm garments to
fold;

But swiftly they run o'er the hard frosty ground,
To the mine whence they know came that terrible
sound.

Oh well may they weep, for the men who are gone,
Without them their homes will be sad and forlorn,
In vain will the children call father to come,
No more will they welcome his safe return home.

And we, as we sit by our cosy fireside,
Think not of the dangers which often betide
The men who work hard for the wages they earn,
At the risk of their lives for the coals which we
burn.

Then let us help those who are left to our care,
And try to relieve them with all we can spare,
Remembering how much of our comfort we owe
To the miner who sends up the coals from below.

THE BELFREY GHOST.

The villagers had gone to rest,
Full two long hours or more,
And all was peace and quietness
Within each cottage door.

No sound disturbed the midnight hour,
Except the night birds cry
From high up in the old church tower,
Or in the wood close by.

When suddenly a noise awoke
The echoes far and near,
And roused the simple country folk,
With faces pale with fear.

It is the bell, the funeral bell,
Whose dismal sound they hear,
Thus tolling forth its solemn knell
Upon the midnight air.

What can it mean ? said Mrs. Prim,
The village tailor's wife ;
Get up and see, said Peter Prim,
Be quick now for your life.

Oh ! no, said she, I would not go
One step outside this night ;
Some ghost is in the church I know,
And I should die with fright.

Then Mr. Prim rose from his bed,
Said he, I'll go and see
What ghost has left the quiet dead,
To come disturbing me.

No soldier on the battle field,
 Clad in his armour bright,
 Felt braver than did Peter Prim,
 On that cold wintry night.

With stick in hand he sallied forth,
 The midnight ghost to meet ;
 And soon he reached the churchyard gate,
 Beyond the village street.

And still the bell kept tolling on,
 What can it mean said he ;
 I'll softly walk around the church,
 It shall not frighten me.

So crossing o'er the churchyard dark,
 He reached the belfry door,
 And then a fear crept over him
 He had not felt before.

If I go up the belfry stairs
 And find a spirit there,
 And after me the door should close,
 No one my voice would hear.

Then braver thoughts came in his mind,
 This will not do said he,
 I must not let such foolish fears
 Come creeping over me.

So up the belfry stairs he went,
 With lantern in his hand,
 And soon he reached the gallery,
 On which the ringers stand.

There stood the village sexton old,
 With bell-rope in his hand,
 Who tolled the bell for rich and poor,
 The lowly and the grand,

Halloo ? said Mr Prim, what now !

What means this noise to-night ?
The sexton thought he was a ghost,
And started back with fright.

Oh harm me not the sexton cried,
I'm but a poor old man,
I never did you any harm,
Oh leave me if you can.

Then down he fell upon his knees,
Beseeching Mr. Prim,
By all the powers in heaven above,
To go away from him.

Why Jeremiah Jones said Prim,
I am no ghost you see,
I've been your neighbour forty years,
Get up and look at me.

Then Jones got up and looked at Prim,
Half fearful still to see
A spirit there, in human form,
So frightened yet was he.

What brings you to the church to-night,
At this unheard of hour ?
I'm sure I thought you were the ghost,
They say is in this tower.

That's just the very thing said Prim,
That I was going to say :
Why are you tolling here to-night,
Instead of in the day ?

Well, Mr. Prim, I'll tell you why
I'm tolling here to-night ;

Though it was very wrong of you
 To give me such a fright.

Our lady at the manor house,
 Has lost her first-born son,
 He died in town a week ago,
 Much honour had he won.

And to his home they're bringing him,
 So that his bones may lie
 Within his own ancestral vault,
 With proper dignity.

They ordered me to toll the bell,
 While his remains pass through
 This parish to his native home,
 From twelve o'clock till two.

I'm sorry I disturbed your sleep,
 But this I'll always say,
 No braver man than Peter Prim
 Is in our Sovereign's pay.

—:oo:—

BERTIE'S FARTHING.

I have, within a little box,
 A very tiny treasure ;
 And every time I look at it,
 It fills my heart with pleasure.

Twas given to me in purest love,
 I'm sure you will not doubt it ;
 If for a moment you will stay,
 I'll tell you all about it.

It was one evening long ago,
 My head was aching badly,
 And I upon the sofa lay,
 I dare say looking sadly.

My little boy was playing near,
 He was my greatest treasure ;
 To watch his happy little face
 Gave me the sweetest pleasure.

That morning I had given him,
 Dear, tiny little fellow,
 A bright new farthing for himself,
 Like gold, it looked so yellow.

He was delighted with the gift,
 And thought it quite a treasure ;
 And carried it about all day,
 Admiring without measure.

Now, when he saw me looking sad,
 How fondly he caressed me,
 And brought me all his infant toys,
 To try and interest me.

At last he said, " here, mother, dear,
 You take my pretty farthing."
 I took the gift, and keep it still,
 In memory of my darling.

"Twas not the value of the gift,
 That filled my heart with pleasure,
 It was the love which prompted him
 To bring his brightest treasure,

And give to me what pleased him most,
 He thought would cheer my sadness,
 He hoped to send my tears away,
 And fill my heart with gladness.

BATTLE OF ISANDULA.

Zululand, January 22nd, 1879.

All honour to our soldiers brave
Who sleep on Afric's shore ;
Though crowned with glory are their names,
Their loss we must deplore.

Surrounded by a countless host
Of Zulus fierce and strong,
They boldly rallied round the flag
And faced the mighty throng.

For English soldiers fear not death,
Their colours they'll defend.
Though each shall have ten foes to meet,
He'll fight them to the end.

Their guns they used with deadly aim,
As on their foes advanced,
Yet forward still the Zulus came,
Though death around them danced.

But what could those few soldiers do,
With foes on every hand,
Each moment found the number less
Around their flag to stand.

Then with their colours in his hand,
True courage in his eye,
A gallant officer rode forth
To save them or to die.

Away he went o'er rugged ground,
Pursued by savage foes,
Then plunged into the river deep,
Its waters o'er him close.

Dismounted in the rapid stream,
 He battled with the wave,
 Still clinging firmly to the flag,
 He yet must try to save.

Another came to help him then,
 A true brave heart had he,
 He just had safely crossed the stream,
 Though wounded in the knee.

He turned his horse, and back he came
 His comrade's task to share,
 They bravely strove across the stream,
 Their precious flag to bear.

On them the Zulus opened fire,
 And shots on every side
 Fell thickly round them, as in vain
 To hold their flag they tried.

For from their grasp the cruel wave
 Their colours bore away,
 And they but reached the rivers bank,
 Exhausted down to lay.

And there they met their cruel fate,
 For all their strength had fled,
 Killed by their Zulu enemies,
 Their comrades found them dead.

Brave officers ! their work was done :
 Their noble task was o'er,
 The colours which they died to save,
 Were safely brought to shore.

For in the river they were found,
 Unnoticed they had lain,

And so the twenty-fourth with joy
Their colours did regain.

—:oo:—

THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

I saw him sitting on a stone
Within the churchyard, sad and lone,
 A weary looking man ;
He watched the village children play,
As gaily on that summer day
 Among the graves they ran.

His was a worn and sun-burnt face,
And in his form you still could trace
 The soldier firm and brave ;
He now had come once more to see
His early friends, but Oh ! said he,
 They all are in the grave.

And I was once a boy like these,
And played beneath these same old trees,
 As free from care as they ;
And yonder is the very spot,
Where stood my mother's humble cot :
 Now all have passed away.

I left my home a youth so gay,
And with my regiment went away,
 In foreign lands to fight ;
Now none are left to weleome me,
For all the people here I see,
 Are strangers to my sight.

I loved a gentle village maid,
 And when I went away, she said
 To me she'd faithful prove ;
 But Oh ! the sad news news came to me
 In far off lands across the sea,
 That death had claimed my love.

That stile beneath the chestnut tree,
 Is where she said good bye to me ;
 I seem to see her still,
 Just as she stood that summer day,
 And watched me as I went away :
 Till hidden by the mill.

Full forty years have passed and gone,
 Since I left home on that bright morn ;
 And now once more I've come
 To see the dear old place again :
 But Oh ! it fills my heart with pain,
 To think I have no home.

But here I'll stay while life shall last,
 And think o'er all the joys gone past,
 Sweet memories still are they ;
 Each evening at the sunset hour,
 I'll sit beneath this leafy bower,
 And watch the closing day.

I hope in peace my life to end,
 And then with mother, sister, friend,
 Once more to meet above :
 Where wars and partings are no more,
 For all upon that heavenly shore
 Is joy, and peace, and love,

ABERCARNE COLLIERY EXPLOSION,

September 11th, 1878.

Hark ! what is that noise like thunder,
Sounding through the peaceful vale ;
Filling every heart with terror,
Making every face turn pale.

All around looks calm and peaceful,
Autumn sunshine floods the dale ;
But from every home there rises,
Sound of sorrows' bitter wail.

Out they rush from every cottage,
Wives and children pale with fear,
Down the hillsides swiftly rushing,
For the news they dread to hear.

Husbands, fathers, brothers, working
In that mine so dark and deep ;
What has happened, are they living ?
Asks each one, as loud they weep.

Clouds of smoke the shaft ascending,
For some moments fill the air,
Telling to the crowd assembled,
That a fire is raging there.

Oh ! what anguish fills each bosom,
As they wait in dread suspense ;
While three noble-hearted miners,
Venture down the pit so dense.

Bravely worked the little party,
Searching for their comrades dear ;

Sometimes pausing for a moment,
Hoping they some voice should hear.

Presently they prove successful,
Eighty-one they find alive ;
And they bring them to the surface,
Thanking God that they survive.

But their comrades, oh ! where are they ?
Near three hundred lives are gone,
In that dark pit fiercely burning,
From their wives and children torn.

God defend the helpless orphans,
And the widow's helper be ;
May they find in Thee the comfort,
All have found who trust in Thee.

And when Christmas bells are ringing,
And we meet in circles bright ;
With a nice warm fire to cheer us,
On a cold and wintry night :

Let us think of those bereavèd,
Who are mourning while we sing,
With no father to support them,
Or nice Christmas presents bring.

Let all England try to help them,
With a rich and bounteous hand,
So that none go unprovided,
In our own dear native land.

—:oo:—

LILY'S LAST PIC-NIC.

Lily dearest ! are you ready,
They are waiting at the gate,

And the morning is so lovely,
But its growing rather late.

I am glad you're going with them,
To the pic-nie in the wood ;
For you've looked so sadly lately,
And the trip will do you good.

And the sweet flowers of the country,
Will refresh you all the way.
And bring back the faded roses
To your cheek, so pale to-day.

This was spoken by a mother,
To her only darling child ;
Who with loving words of comfort,
Many weary hours beguiled.

She was anxious that her darling
Should enjoy a happy day,
For her home was in the city,
And the woods were far away.

But a kind of dread foreboding,
Would come o'er that mother's heart,
And she felt as though she could not
With her daughter bear to part.

Had some angel whispered to her,
That before that day should close,
Her sweet flower would droop and wither,
And in death's cold arms repose.

Oh ! how foudly would that mother
Have entreated her to stay ;
Nor allowed her child to leave her,
On that last sad summer's day.

With her friends all young and happy,
 To the woods she went that day,
 And their songs and pleasant music,
 Woke the echoes all the way.

Brightly gleamed the summer sunshine,
 And the hills were gay with flowers ;
 While the birds rang forth a chorus
 From their green and leafy bowers.

But no flower in all the woodland,
 With our Lily could compare ;
 With her eyes of blue, so gentle,
 And her clouds of golden hair.

As the evening shades were falling,
 We were walking in a lane ;
 When our Lily's cheeks grew paler,
 And we saw she was in pain ;

So with tender arms we bore her,
 To a grassy bank close by ;
 And amongst the summer flowers : there
 We laid her down to die.

No more she smiled upon us, for
 Her happy soul had fled ;
 And the startled ones around her,
 Only looked upon the dead.

Then we looked at one another,
 Asking who the news could tell
 To the poor bereavèd mother,
 Who we knew loved her so well.

When we started on that morning,
 All so full of mirth and joy ;

No one thought how death would meet us,
And our happiness destroy.

Bearing off our gentle Lily,
Fairest flower of us all,
Casting gloom and sadness o'er us,
Like a heavy funeral pall.

Oh ! she looked just like an angel,
In her dress of snowy white ;
As the soft light fell upon her,
On that summer evening bright.

In her dress she wore a rose-bud,
Plucked that morning fresh and gay—
Now like her it drooped and withered,
All its brightness fled away.

But our Lily has but left us
For a brighter home above ;
For we know she was rejoicing
In her heavenly Father's love.

And though suddenly he called her,
She was ready to obey :
And but passed through death's dark portal
Into everlasting day.

—:oo:—

THE FOLDED LAMB.

A little blue eyed maiden
Sat by her mother's side,
And listened to the story
Of how the Saviour died.

She heard with childish wonder,
 That tale of holy love,
 Which brought a gracious Saviour,
 Down from the realms above.

And does He love the children,
 Such tiny ones as me ;
 Can I go up to heaven,
 One of his lambs to be.

Her mother answered gently,
 My little girl may be
 One of the Saviour's cherubs,
 His glorious heaven to see.

If he sees fit to call her
 While yet a little child :
 But, as she spake a sadness
 Came o'er her face so mild,

She looked upon her darling,
 And thought within her heart,
 Oh ! should the Saviour call her,
 How could I bear to part ?

This world to me without her
 Would like a desert be ;
 God grant that this my treasure
 May long be spared to me.

T'was but a few days after,
 A messenger of death
 Came for her little daughter,
 Who with her latest breath :

Said, " dont you cry, dear mother,
 I'm going to the fold ;

Where Jesus takes the little lambs,
Just as you've often told ;

And you must come there to me,
And walk with me in white,
All round the golden city,
Amid the angels bright."

The tiny hands were folded,
The soft blue eyes were closed ;
Beneath the summer flowers
Her little form reposed.

Her spirit lives in heaven,
Among the joyous throng,
Of ransom'd ones in glory,
Who sing that glorious song.

And God has blessed her mother,
And healed her broken heart,
And shown her that in wisdom,
She thus was called to part

With this her earthly treasure,
Now stored in heaven above,
Where she may surely follow,
Drawn by the cords of love.

—:oo:—

THE BUNCH OF WILD FLOWERS.

Oh, lovely flowers, so fresh, so fair,
They speak to me of meadows where
I picked them when a child ;

Reminding me of flowery dells,
Where cowslips, violets, and bluebells
Grew in profusion wild.

They speak to me of youthful days,
When grown too old for childish plays
I wandered, book in hand,
And read beneath some shady tree,
With flowers on every side of me,
And over all the land.

They tell me of the happy morn
When they were gathered to adorn,
A gentle village bride,
As from the church she walked that day
All strewn about her path they lay :
Scattered on every side.

They tell me of a grassy mound,
Where, but a few feet underground,
I buried one I love ;
Upon her grave sweet violets grow,
And roses, too, as white as snow,
Shaded by trees above.

Oh wonderful that tiny flowers
Should thus recal so many hours
Of sadness, or of joy ;
And, now, amid the care and strife
Of this dark busy city life,
Their fragrance I enjoy.

They look so innocent and sweet,
As though they just were come to greet
Us with a smile ;
And make us think of woodlands fair,
Of hill, and dales, and meadows where
They grow for many a mile.

WILLIE'S PET CAT.

Pussy is a darling pet,
In her coat of shining jet,
Purring in the warm sunshine,
What a lovely cat is mine.

See ! she answers to my call,
Leaping from the garden wall ;
She shall have some milk and bread,
While I gently stroke her head.

There's a clever cat, now, see !
She will give her paw to me.
If I say, " puss, there's a mouse,"
She will search all round the house.

Then a quiet watch she'll keep,
While appearing fast asleep,
And, when mousey shows his head,
Up she jumps and strikes him dead.

Sometimes on a sunny day,
When we're out of doors at play
She will have a game at ball,
In the garden, with us all.

But one thing puss will not learn,
She will not take her proper turn ;
Every time she sees us run,
Off she goes to join the fun.

I'll tell you what she did one day,
T'will make you laugh, now, I daresay ;
We had a hedge-hog brought to town,
To try to keep the beetles down :

Now, when puss saw the ugly thing,
 At him she went with such a spring ;
 Then quick as lightning back she flew
 With such a loud distressing mew.

Then from the hedgehog walked away,
 His prickly coat had won the day ;
 The lesson puss in memory keeps,
 And looks always before she leaps.

—:00:—

THE FADED FLOWERS.

The stream was swift, and broad, and deep,
 Its banks were steep and high ;
 Yet near it sat a child asleep,
 Unheeding danger nigh.

Within each hand he held a flower,
 A bunch was in his hat ;
 And there beneath a shady bower,
 Among the flowers he sat.

His little head had drooped aside,
 And rested near a tree ;
 As from the bridge his form I spied,
 A picture fair was he.

Just then he woke—there was no chance
 To save him e're he fell ;
 I saw his danger at a glance,
 My feelings, who can tell ?

Down the steep bank he quickly rolled
 Into the stream so deep,
 And sank beneath the waters cold ;
 The sight it made me weep.

He was his mother's only boy,
 No other child had she ;
 Oh cruel fate ! to thus destroy
 Her child so suddenly.

When next I saw that little child,
 'Twas in his coffin small,
 And in each hand he held a flower,
 Though faded were they all.

I knew they were the daisies white,
 And buttercups so gay,
 Which he had plucked beside the stream,
 On that sad fatal day.

Dear little one, his infant life
 Had passed like summer flowers,
 And we are left to mourn his loss,
 Through many weary hours.

—:oo:—

THE TWO HOMES—RICH AND POOR.

A lady sat in her parlour warm,
 One cold and frosty day,
 Surrounded by a youthful band
 Of children bright and gay.

Oh look mamma ? the lovely snow
 Is over all the ground ;
 And we can skate upon the pond,
 The ice is hard and sound.

So off they went, those children fair,
 Wrapt in their furs so warm,
 They quite enjoy'd the wintry cold,
 For them it had a charm.

At home they had a well-spread board,
 A pleasant cheerful fire,
 And every comfort wealth could grant,
 No more could they desire.

The wintry winds might howl and blow,
 And shake the trees around ;
 And fields be covered white with snow,
 All frozen on the ground ;

It only gave them pleasures new,
 To view a scene so fair ;
 And watch the snow-flakes as they came
 All dancing through the air.

And in their warm well-lighted room,
 The evening passed so gay,
 They often wished that winter-time
 Could with them longer stay.

Oh ! life to them was bright indeed,
 With riches, health, and friends ;
 The misery they little knew,
 Which poverty attends.

Not half a mile from where they lived,
 A woman young and fair,

Sat in her garret-room so sad,
No fire to warm her there.

Two little ones were nestled close
Beside her garments old ;
Poor mother ! little warmth was there
To shield them from the cold.

Their little faces looked so sad,
No childish mirth was there ;
But hungry now they cried for bread,
Their cries she scarce could bear.

Oh ! hush, my darlings, wait awhile—
P'raps father soon will come ;
If he but gets a loaf of bread,
I'm sure he'll hurry home.

And as she spoke, the wintry blast
Swept o'er the easement old,
And through the broken panes of glass,
It came with piercing cold.

Oh ! mother look, the dreadful snow
Is coming in again ;
It came so cold upon my head,
Through that old broken pane.

The father came at last, said he,—
I've walked the country round,
But not the smallest bit of work,
Can there for me be found.

Thank God ! I've got a loaf of bread,
"Twas given me to-day,
For helping for an hour or two,
To clear the snow away.

They gave me too, this can of milk,
 "Twill do the children good ;
 And see, I've gathered 'neath the trees
 Some bits of broken wood.

Poor souls how thankful thus were they,
 This humble meal to share ;
 Not knowing whence the next would come,
 But offering up a prayer—

That God would take the snow away,
 And send some warmer weather ;
 That they might earn their daily bread,
 And keep a home together.

—o:o:—

CHRISTMAS MORNING, 1878.

Christmas, merry Christmas time,
 Comes again to cheer us,
 Sweetly peals the morning chime,
 From the church bells near us,
 Merry, happy ! Christmas bells,
 Joyful news your music tells.

As I listen to your song,
 Memories soft come o'er me ;
 Christmas days gone past so long,
 Seem to come before me ;
 And again dear friends I see,
 Who have passed away from me.

In my youthful, happy home,
 Christmas day was jolly !
 In our pleasant sitting room,
 Gaily decked with holly ;
 None so happy then as we—
 One united family.

But how swiftly pass the years,
 Youthful friends where are they ?
 Some have left this vale of tears,
 For a home in glory ;
 Many in a foreign clime,
 Think of us this Christmas time.

Many on this festive day,
 Meet around the table,
 Who instead of colours gay,
 Now are dressed in sable ;
 And they drop a silent tear,
 As they view the vacant chair.

Homes are desolate and sad,
 Where last Christmas morning,
 Every one with voice so glad
 Hailed the earliest dawning ;
 Death has been throughout our land,
 With unsparing cruel hand.

Casting sad and solemn gloom
 O'er our Royal Palace,
 Taking to her heavenly home,
 Much-loved Princess Alice ;
 Christmas bells will fail to cheer
 Those who mourn their friends so dear.

Let us then with grateful heart,
 Thank our heavenly Father,

That we've not been called to part
 With our friends but rather—
 This year brings us many more
 Than we ever had before.

—:00:—

TELL MOTHER !

(A touching incident in the Zulu War.)

Tell mother ! that was all he said,
 As from his horse he fell ;
 For death so quickly sealed his lips,
 Before he more could tell.

Tell mother ! Ah what could they tell,
 But that her son was dead ;
 That on the battle-field he fell,
 And for his country bled.

Tell mother, that lie thought of her,
 His truest friend and best ;
 And though but two small words were said,
 We know she'll guess the rest.

Tell mother he had hoped to live,
 To see her face once more,
 And bring her home some treasure rare,
 From off a foreign shore.

Tell mother that her loving words
 Of counsel good and kind,
 Though told to him so long ago,
 Were ever kept in mind.

Tell mother that when battles raged,
 And hostile foes were nigh,
 Her son could like a soldier fight,
 And like a christian die.

Tell mother that in heaven above,
 She'll meet again her boy ;
 United in eternal love,
 And everlasting joy.

— :oo: —

THE CONVICT'S WIFE.

'Twas on a wintry day,
 Fierce blew the wind and cold ;
 A woman paced the street,
 In garments mean and old.
 Her face was pale and worn
 With anguish, grief, and fear ;
 As hastily she wiped
 Away the falling tear.

What is she waiting for :
 Oh ! sad the news to tell,
 Her husband is confined
 Within that prison cell ;
 For many years she's wept
 And prayed to God for him ;
 And yet what is he now,
 A felon steeped in sin.

How gloomy look the walls
 Of stone so rough and hard :

Fit dwelling place for those,
 Whose crimes have thus debarred
 Them, from associating
 With their fellow-men ;
 And shut them up within
 That stony prison den.

And now a little crowd
 Assemble at the door,
 An anxious looking crowd,
 And mostly mean and poor ;
 She sees them enter yet,
 She walks on down the street
 In constant dread, lest she
 Some well-known face shall meet.

Just then, as though to mock
 Her heart so full of care,
 A merry peal of bells
 Burst forth, and filled the air
 With melody, which made
 Her think of happier times,
 Before her life was sad,
 All through her husband's crimes.

At last she ventures in,
 And takes a sad farewell
 Of him who still she loves,
 Though in a prison cell :
 Though all the world despise
 Him, still there's one true heart
 Mourns o'er his sins—yet in
 His sorrow bears a part.

He looks upon her face,
 So weary and so worn ;

He thinks of all the past,
 The troubles she has borne ;
 Repentance comes too late,
 Stern justice claims him now ;
 He begs her to forgive,
 And takes a solemn vow—

When seven long years are past,
 I'll lead a better life,
 I'll never grieve you more,
 My own dear faithful wife ;
 Hope on, and pray for me
 When I am far away,
 I promise you, I will
 Reform from this sad day.

And so they parted, ne'er
 On earth to meet again ;
 Sadly she sought her home,
 Her heart was full of pain ;
 Her darling child was there,
 Her one bright earthly joy,
 The only comfort left
 Was this, her infant boy.

Why do you weep so much—
 Dear mother, tell me why ?
 Is father ill, or dead,
 That you so often cry ?
 Oh no, my child, but for
 A time he's gone away,
 From foreign lands he will
 Return to you some day.

When he comes home again,
 Just tell him what I say ;

God's angels have been down,
 To carry me away,
 To that bright home above,
 Where he's to follow me,
 To lead a happier life
 Than this can ever be.

And so she passed away,
 Poor broken-hearted wife,
 And left her orphan boy,
 Amid this world of strife ;
 She prayed that God would take
 Her boy beneath His care,
 And guide his steps aright—
 And God has heard her prayer.

When many years had passed,
 Sad bitter tears were shed,
 By he who once again
 Returned to find her dead ;
 Upon her grave he knelt,
 And humbly prayed to God,
 That when he too should be
 Beneath that same green sod ;
 His spirit washed in Christ
 Our Saviour's blood, might rise
 To meet his long lost wife,
 In heaven above the skies.

—:oo:—

THE MOURNER'S PRAYER.

'Twas evening, and the summer sun
 Was sinking in the west ;

As after walking many a mile,
I sat me down to rest.

Around me lay the quiet dead,
In peaceful calm repose,
Unconscious now of earthly joys,
Untroubled by its woes.

The summer flowers around me grew,
On many a grassy mound,
And as the dew fell on them, shed
Their fragrance all around.

And from the village church close by
Rang forth the evening chimes ;
I thought how those now sleeping there,
Had heard them many times.

For that old ivy mantled church
Has stood a hundred years ;
And witnessed many a joyful bride,
And many a mourner's tears.

As I sat musing o'er the past,
A childish voice close by,
Said : mother ! which is grandma's grave ?
Dear mother, don't you cry.

I looked around, a beantious child,
Was by his mother led,
With gentle footsteps, o'er the graves
Where slept the silent dead.

'Tis here beneath this stone, my child,
That your dear grandma lies ;
But though her body's buried here,
She lives beyond the skies.

Her happy spirit lives in heaven,
 That home of joy and love ;
 I seem to hear her calling us,
 To follow her above.

Come ! let us kneel upon her grave,
 And offer up a prayer,
 That God may guide our steps aright,
 That we may meet her there.

They knelt, the mother and the child :
 I listened to their prayer,
 As slowly came the solemn words,
 Upon the evening air.

Oh God ! look down upon my child,
 And draw his heart to thee,
 And make him holy, kind, and good,
 As thou would'st have him be.

May I his footsteps guide aright,
 As mine in youth were led,
 By her who now beneath this stone,
 Is sleeping with the dead.

Though bitterly we mourn our loss,
 Yet help us with thy love,
 And fit us for a holier life,
 With her in heaven above.

They rose, the mother and the child,
 They had not seen me there ;
 My memory long will keep in mind,
 That simple evening prayer.

THE SOLDIERS' FAREWELL.

(On their departure from Portsmouth, for Zululand.)

I saw them start ! a brave and noble band
Of soldiers, who were bound for Zululand ;
Right bravely went they forth to meet the foe ;
Where duty called, they were prepared to go.

Yet 'twas a sight which touched my heart, to see
The dear ones left behind, grieving so bitterly ;
The soldiers turned to bid one last farewell ;
Will e'er they meet again ? Ah, who can tell ?

The crowds were cheering as they passed along,
And bands of music played a lively song ;
Yet, as the soldiers thought of those so dear,
Down many a sunburnt face there rolled a tear.

And did that tear disgrace the soldier, no !
Within his bosom gentle feelings flow ;
Though to the world he is the soldier brave,
Ready to die, his native land to save.

Yet in his home, with baby on his knee
So gentle and so kind, a father he ;
A loving husband too, his greatest pride
Is she, who once became his early bride.

But now the soldier and his wife must part,
And children who are dearer to his heart
Than all the world : must say a sad good-bye
To him, who now departs perhaps to die,

NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE.

Where the purple violets grow,
 'Neath the drooping willow tree,
 They have laid my darling low,
 Hidden from the world and me.
 Birds as sweetly sing to-day,
 In the sunshine bright and warm,
 But I don't enjoy their lay :
 Now their music fails to charm.

How he loved the birds and flowers ;
 Yet he's gone from them, and me,
 And the sad and lonely hours,
 Pass away most wearily.
 Often on a summer's eve,
 When the sun sinks in the west,
 Far behind the town, I leave
 For that place of quiet rest.

Though his form I cannot see,
 Yet I feel his presence there ;
 Angels' voices seem to be
 Gently floating in the air ;
 And they seem to say to me,
 Weeping mourner dry thy tears,
 He's from sin and sorrow free,
 Free from all life's earthly cares.

In a brighter, happier land,
 He is waiting now for thee ;
 And our heavenly Father's hand
 Shall support and strengthen thee ;

When life's many trials are o'er,
 And thy earthly work is done,
 Safe upon the heavenly shore,
 Thou shalt meet thy much-loved one.

— :oo: —

A PEDLAR'S PERPLEXITIES.

If you will listen, I will tell,
 Some of the troubles which befel
 Me in this world of strife ;
 I used to work, like other men,
 Until a sad misfortune, when
 I nearly lost my life.

And when again I walked about,
 I found that I must do without
 One poor disabled hand ;
 So to my work I could not go,
 But sadly wandered to and fro,
 An idler in the land.

At last a neighbour said to me :
 Why, Jem ! if I were you I'd be
 A Pedlar, and go round
 And try and sell some little thing,
 Which would to you some profit bring—
 I'll start you with a pound.

At first I thought I could not go,
 My comrades all would chaff me so,
 To see me with a pack ;

But wiser thoughts came in my head,
So off upon the road I sped,
 My goods upon my back.

Away I went for many a mile,
And trudged along in first-rate style,
 Until I came to where
The people were all strange to me,
And in the crowd I failed to see,
 A soul who knew me there.

And when I first began to sell,
The people used me very well,
 My goods they kindly bought.
And soon, accustomed to the trade,
I found a living could be made
 By working as I ought.

But even in a Pedlar's life,
Things will occur to stir up strife,
 Though trifles they may seem ;
For instance, on a washing day,
When all the men are best away,
 It rains down quite a stream.

Then in the house I'm forced to stay,
If baby's cross, I have to play
 The nurse as best I can.
Oh ! could you hear that baby cry,
You'd say he was enough to try
 The nerves of any man.

One morning, in the winter time,
My wife said, Jem, its half-past nine,
 And we no coals have got ;
The man won't come this way to-day,
The snow has blocked up all the way,
 You'll fetch some, will you not ?

So taking an old carpet-bag,
 Away I went some coals to drag,
 Full half a mile or more :
 It was a dark and foggy day,
 The pavement slippery all the way,
 I wished I was not poor.

For if with riches I were blest,
 In winter time I'd take a rest,
 And snug at home remain.
 And then my cellar I would fill,
 With coals and wood to last me till
 The summer came again.

Now, as I was returning home,
 Just by a station I had come,
 Where policemen sit in state ;
 Or idly wander in and out,
 Important, turn, and look about—
 As for a charge they wait.

Then up to me there came a man,
 Who said, allow me just to scan
 The contents of that bag ;
 I asked him what on earth he meant !
 He said I'm a detective sent
 To search that heavy bag.

I said, well, now I'll tell you what,
 I strongly would advise you not
 To carry this too far ;
 A friendly joke is very well,
 But what's in there I will not tell
 Detective though you are.

With that he said, well, come with me
Into the station and we'll see,

If you're a thief or not;
Some heavy plate was lost last night,
And if what I suspect is right,
That's just what you have got.

So in he went with bag in hand.
And soon he made them understand
This most important news;
That he had met me in the road,
With this suspicious-looking load,
Just down beyond the mews.

The grave Inspector then began,
I order you at once young man
To let the Policeman see
What you have got within that bag,
So heavy you can scarcely drag
Along the road I see.

Well, sir, said I, you'll understand
That as I have but one strong hand,
It is a load for me;
But most of it will end in smoke,
The truth it is which I have spoke,
And that you'll quickly see.

So then the bag I opened wide.
And when the contents he espied
You should have seen his look;
The policeman too who brought me in,
Thinking perhaps a prize to win
His burglar quite mistook.

But for himself he'd made a name,
 And to this day he's called the same,
 By all the men in blue ;
 And when I chance to pass that way,
 Poor Coaley looks another way,
 And wishes I would too.

But time would fail were I to dwell
 Upon my troubles, or to tell
 One half to you to-day,
 So if you please, another time
 I'll put some more of them in rhyme,
 And farewell ! now I say.

—:oo:—

MY GRANDMOTHER'S FUNERAL.

I stood within a village church,
 One bright day in September.
 The feelings I experienced then,
 I ever shall remember.
 For death had claimed my dearest friend,
 I came her funeral to attend.

Oh, it was sad : she died alone,
 No son or daughter near her ;
 Kind, loving words I'm sure she said,
 Though none of us could hear her.
 For we were very far away,
 And knew not that she dying lay.

The church was gaily decked with flowers,

They seemed to mock my sorrow ;

The harvest festival was near,

It would be held to-morrow.

Though all around looked gay and bright,

My heart within felt dark as night.

I looked around the dear old church,

And thought of much-loved faces

I used to see so long ago

In those now vacant places.

And now the last and best of all

Lay cold beneath her funeral pall.

She was so pleasant, kind, and good,

So gentle and true-hearted ;

I'll think of her with fondest love,

Tho' for a while we're parted.

One day we both shall meet again.

Far from this world of care and pain.

And so we laid her in the grave,

Where nothing more could grieve her ;

And with sad hearts we came away,

When we were forced to leave her.

That quiet spot is dear to me,

Beneath the mournful cypress tree.

—:oo:—

MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD.

Happy, happy childhood's hours !

Sweet their memory is to me,

When 'mid sweetly scented flowers,
 'Neath the shade of some green tree,
 I could read, or sing, or play,
 All the long bright summer day.

And when wintry winds blew cold,
 All around our cottage home,
 Father pleasant stories told
 In our parlour snug and warm,
 As around the fire we sat,
 All engaged in pleasant chat.

Mother, in her easy chair,
 Looked so happy, calm, and bright.
 In my memory still she's there,
 As she sat that winter's night,
 Looking down with smile so sweet
 On we children at her feet.

Darling little sister Nell
 Was my greatest treasure then.
 How I loved her none can tell,
 Nor the sorrow I felt when
 Childhood's days had passed away,
 And there came a parting day.

Many years have passed away
 Since I saw my childhood's home ;
 But my memory still retains,
 All its joys wherein to roam.
 Pleasant thought it brings to me
 Amid life's rough and troubled sea.

ACROSTIC.

Mother, thy name is dear to me,
Oh ! how I love to think of thee.
Thy gentle, loving, patient care
Hath followed me from year to year.
Ever thy tender love shall be
Remembered and returned by me.

—:oo:—

A WIFE'S LAMENT.

Mother, is thy gentle spirit
Watching o'er thy child to-night ;
Canst thou see me, sad and weary,
Waiting for the morning light.

He, who once so kind and tender,
Took me for his loving wife.
Promised at God's holy altar,
I should be his own for life.

Now has left me cold and hungry,
On this bitter wintry night,
While he sports with gay companions,
Sometimes until morning light.

For a few years we were happy ;
Home was bright as summer morn,
And with joy we hailed the advent,
Of our boy—our dear first-born.

Soon, dear mother, thou wast taken,
 To the home of God above ;
 And we missed thee from our circle,
 Where we lived in truest love.

Often have we sat together,
 By our fireside, warm and snug,
 With our little baby playing
 At our feet upon the rug.

And thy chair has stood beside us,
 Where thou always used to sit,
 With the cover hanging o'er it,
 Which I saw thy fingers knit.

And together we did mourn thee,
 And to comfort me he tried.
 As, with tender hand he wiped away
 The tears I could not hide.

Oh, could any one have told me,
 In those early, happy days,
 That strong drink could so have changed him,
 From all good and noble ways.

But when once it had ensnared him,
 Like a slave it bound him fast ;
 Wife and child were both neglected,
 All their happiness gone past.

Just a year ago this Christmas—
 Yes, 'twas on this very night,
 That our little boy was taken,
 Home to join the angels bright.

All night long I sat and watched him,
 With his tiny hand in mine,

And the peaceful joy of heaven,
Seemed around his face to shine.

And I thought of thee, dear mother,
Who so soon would meet my boy,
'Mid fair scenes of untold glory,
And eternal, endless joy.

And to-night, as I sit lonely,
Thinking of the troubled past,
Praying God to save my husband
From the drunkard's end at last.

Seems to me I feel thy presence,
And thy voice I seem to hear,
Speaking words of hope and comfort,
To thy weeping child so dear.

Very soon I hope to join thee,
With my little one above,
Evermore to be united
In eternal bonds of love.

—————:oo:————

IN MEMORIAM.

PRINCE IMPERIAL,

Killed in Zululand, June, 1879.

Let England mourn with sorrow deep,
For him who now has passed away ;
A Prince was he for whom we weep,
Beloved, though short on earth his stay.

Eventful was his youthful life,
 An exile from his native land ;
 He joined our forces in the strife,
 Against our foes with us to stand.

Fierce was the war through which he came,
 For refuge to Old England's shore ;
 And long shall he be known to fame.
 Though we shall see his face no more.

A bright and joyous youth was he,
 Who volunteered with courage bold
 To face the Zulu enemy,
 And with our men his name enrolled.

His widowed mother's only son,
 More dear to her than all beside ;
 Esteemed and loved by every one,
 Was he who in our cause has died.

And who can tell the bitter grief
 Which fills that Royal Mother's heart ;
 Her sorrow is beyond relief,
 Though gladly we would bear a part.

She now her last fond hope has lost,
 Her throne, her husband, all are gone :
 Of friends, she has a mighty host,
 Yet 'mid them all she feels alone.

Alone, beside two vacant chairs,
 Where those she loved were used to kneel,
 And with her offer up their prayers ;
 Oh ! what must that dear mourner feel.

The son who knelt so many years
 Beside her at that holy shrine,

Has left her in this vale of tears
Alone, to seek the aid divine.

But England long will honour one,
Whose virtues shine forth pure and bright ;
She'll mourn for her adopted son,
To memory dear, tho' lost to sight.

We sympathise with heartfelt grief,
With her who claims our tenderest care ;
Whose joys in life have been so brief :
Whose trials have multiplied each year.

And as we think of her, we'll pray
That God will comfort and sustain
Her through this dark and dreary day,
And shed on her some light again.

God grant her strength to look above,
And find pure consolation there ;
And show her all was done in love,
By him who hears a mourner's prayer.

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